

Administration of Barack Obama, 2014

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by King Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

April 26, 2014

King Abdul Halim. The Honorable President Barack Obama, President of the United States; Excellencies; honored guests; ladies and gentlemen: The Raja Permaisuri Agong joins us in warmly welcoming you, Mr. President, and your delegation to Istana Negara on the occasion of your state visit to Malaysia.

The visit clearly manifests the excellent state of the longstanding relations between our governments and people of Malaysia and the United States.

Your Honorable, we are heartened that your visit builds upon the close bond of friendship between our two countries on the recent missing flight MH370 involving many nationalities, including Malaysians and Americans. We wish to express our utmost gratitude for the U.S. unwavering support and cooperation. Your involvement since the beginning of the search and rescue mission and the ongoing recovery operation indeed exemplifies the strong commitment established between our two countries.

We are pleased to see the ties between our two countries gaining so much traction. Over the years, the two countries' common interests and shared values have flourished. We are also delighted that both our countries will be discussing ways to strengthen cooperation in wide-ranging areas of economy, security and defense, education, energy, science and technology, and people-to-people relations.

The economic ties between our two countries have been very strong. Your continuous support to our country's economic growth would prepare Malaysia in its aspiration to reach the developed nation status.

We welcome the United States to continue working hand in hand with Malaysia to ensure the peace and stability of the region. This could be attained through the shared values and mutual respect, understanding, and moderation, coupled by the strong people-to-people relations, testifying both our countries' good will and mutual understanding.

Mr. President, you can be rest assured that Malaysia will continue our efforts to build a strong, nourished, and lasting relationship between the United States as a foundation for the stability and prosperity of our countries.

We hope that your visit to Malaysia is both meaningful and memorable. It is our hope that you will enjoy our hospitality and return to the United States with fond memories of Malaysia. We pray for your continued good health, as well as for that of your family and for the people of the United States. We pray also for peace, stability, and prosperity for both our countries in the years to come.

Ladies and gentlemen, we would like to invite all of you to join us in proposing a toast to the President and the people of the United States.

Thank you.

[At this point, a toast was offered.]

President Obama. Good evening. *Selamat petang.* Your Majesty, thank you so much for those warm words. To you; Her Majesty; Madam Rosmah; Prime Minister; distinguished guests and friends: Thank you for the extraordinary hospitality that you've shown me and my delegation. And on behalf of my country, I want to thank the Malaysian people for the wonderful welcome that you extended to us today.

I'm delighted to make this historic visit. As some of you may know, it has been nearly 50 years since an American President visited Malaysia. In his memoirs, Lyndon Johnson wrote of how impressed he was by the "extraordinary vitality and eagerness" he saw in the faces of people here and throughout Southeast Asia. And I'm eager to see that same *boleh* spirit tomorrow when I have the opportunity to speak with young people from across Southeast Asia at the University of Malaya.

Mr. Prime Minister, I look forward to our work together, and I pledge to infuse our efforts with that same spirit. Tonight I simply want to express my gratitude for the generosity that you've shown us today, a generosity the people of Malaysia have extended to my family since I was elected.

As some of you may know, 2 years ago, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia hosted an exhibit that showcased some of my mother's batik collection. Now, my mother loved batik. I remember when I was a boy growing up in Jakarta, she'd come home from village markets with her arms full of batik, and she'd lay them around the house and look at them and make dresses out of them. And I was a young boy, so I wasn't as excited as she was. [*Laughter*]

And they weren't particularly fancy or expensive—although, later in life, she would get some antiques that were extraordinary—but for my mother, batik wasn't about fashion. It was representative of the work and the livelihood of mothers and young women who had painstakingly crafted them. It was a window into the lives of others, their cultures and their traditions and their hopes. And it meant so much to her, and it was part of her spirit, and so I'm deeply grateful to the people of Malaysia for celebrating that part of my mother's life. It was very kind of you.

And I tell this story because my mother believed, and I believe, that whether we come from a remote village or a big city, whether we live in the United States or in Malaysia, that we all share basic human aspirations: to live in dignity and peace, to shape our own destiny, to be able to make a living and to work hard and support a family and, most of all, to leave the next generation something better than was left to us.

These are the aspirations that I believe illuminate a new era of partnership—of *berkerjasama*—between the United States and Malaysia. For while we may be different as nations, our people have similar hopes and similar aspirations. And we can draw strength in both our nations from our ethnic and religious diversity. We can draw hope from our history. And we dream of a brighter future for all of our children.

So I would like to propose a toast: To the strength of our relationship, the power of our friendship, the peace and prosperity of our peoples, and the good health of Their Majesties the King and Queen.

[*A toast was offered.*]

President Obama. *Terima kasih banyak.* Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:38 p.m. at the Istana Negara. In his remarks, he referred to Queen Tuanku Hajah Haminah of Malaysia; and Prime Minister Najib Razak of Malaysia and his wife Rosmah Mansor.

Categories: Meetings with Foreign Leaders : Malaysia, King Abdul Halim.

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Names: Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, King; Najib Razak; Rosmah Mansor; Tuanku Hajah Haminah, Queen.

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